

View on the Current Situation in Kosovo

Tome Batkovski

ABSTRACT

The newly established situation in Kosovo, after the conclusion of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia, has not resolved the open issues but, instead, introduced new questions in regard to internal, regional and European positions of Kosovo and Yugoslavia, questions which will in the long term be a burden on the security situation in the explosive "Balkan powder keg". The first priority in Kosovo is a speedy and effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which will present a serious test for the international community. Results here will affect success in various moves for reconciliation in a variety of conflicts. On the Kosovo political scene, the main struggle in Albanian political bodies will be between representatives of former UCK-Tachists, which are characterized as extremists, and the moderate forces of the DSK, led by Ibrahim Rugova. In peacetime conditions, the moderate forces are slowly and effectively making political gains, and are more familiar with international community positions on multiethnic and multireligious entities as opposed to autonomy. In the area of security, serious threats might emerge from the former commanders in the paramilitary UCK formations, who are dissatisfied with their positions in the newly established transition government and civil administration.

The end of the NATO military campaign against the former Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis, and the deployment of KFOR forces into the Kosovo territory subsequent to the withdrawal of Yugoslav military and police forces signify a definite beginning of the democratic resolution of the problems in this part of the Balkans. However, these developments present many questions in regard to Kosovo, Yugoslavia, the region, and Europe as a whole, which will present a burden on the long-term security in the explosive "Balkan powder keg". Resolution 1244 on Kosovo, adopted by the UN Security Council on June 10, 1999, represents the

basis for and, at the same time, the most appropriate way of reaching a just and proper solution to the Kosovo crisis.

Therefore, having in mind the political, military administrative, and socio-pathological elements in Kosovo, let us address the essential provisions of this document in order to reach relevant conclusions about the security mosaic in this troubled region.

Security Council Resolution 1244

Resolution 1244 on Kosovo, adopted by the Security Council, takes as a starting point the following premises: "preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of other states in the region, under the Helsinki Final Act and Annex 2: reaffirming the request for substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo in the real sense of the word: confirmation that the situation in the region continues to present a threat to international peace and security, and presents 21 points (decisions, requests, obligatory directions) in which it is:

- requested that Federal Republic of Yugoslavia immediately put a verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo and commence and complete verifiable phased withdrawal from Kosovo of all military, police and paramilitary forces according to a quick schedule (point 3);
- confirmed that after the withdrawal, the agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be allowed to return to Kosovo in order to perform the functions in accordance with Annex 2 (point 4);
- decides that civilian and security presence be deployed in Kosovo, under UN auspices and welcomes the acceptance of this presence by FRY (point 5);
- requests the Secretary-General, in agreement with the Security Council, to appoint a special representative who will control the application of international civilian presence (point 6);
- authorizes member states and relevant international organizations to establish presence of international security forces in Kosovo, as stated in point 4 of Annex 2 (point 7);
- confirms the necessity to deploy effective international civilian and security forces in Kosovo and requests the parties to fully cooperate in their deployment (point 8);
- decides that the responsibilities of the international security presence deployed and operating in Kosovo shall include: deterrence of renewed hostilities; demilitarization of KLA and other armed groups of Kosovo Albanians; establishment of a safe environment for the refugees and displaced persons to return

- safely and so that transitional administration may be established and humanitarian aid may be provided; carrying out duties for the necessary monitoring of the borders; ensuring protection and freedom of movement for itself, the international civilian presence and other international organizations; ensuring public security and peace until international civilian presence undertakes the responsibility for this task (point 9);
- authorizes the Secretary General to establish international civil presence in Kosovo in order to ensure interim administration for Kosovo according to which people in Kosovo may enjoy significant autonomy within Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (point 10);
- main responsibilities of the civil presence will include promotion of the establishment, until final resolution, of significant autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, fully taking into account annex 2 and the Rambouillet Agreement; enabling of a political process intended to determine the future Kosovo status, taking into account the Rambouillet Agreement; ensuring safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo (point 11);
- requests KLA and other armed groups of Kosovo Albanians to immediately stop all offensive activities and to respect the terms for demilitarization stated by the chief of international security presence in consultation with the special representative of the Secretary General (point 15);
- requests all states in the region to fully cooperate in the application of all aspects in this resolution (point 18);
- decides that the civil and security presence be established first for a period of 12 months and to further continue unless otherwise decided by the Security Council (point 19);

The adoption of this document represents a serious and heavy burden on the UN representing the international community, as well as a significant responsibility in respect to the necessity of its quick and qualitative implementation. On the other hand, it may be said that this is a test for the UN, which will determine its future success and international rating in the 21st century; that is, whether the proper direction and means for finding a solution to the Kosovo crisis (and similar crises in the future in Europe and other continents) have been taken, and, if taken, whether the UN has efficient means and forces available for its realization.

Albanian Nationalism

One of the most significant issues which should be taken into consideration when beginning an analysis and assessment of the Kosovo crisis is the "constants" of Albanian nationalism, which this author presents and elaborates upon in his book "Albanian

Nationalists' Game In Macedonia", published in Skopje, 1994. The book addresses the subjects of territorial, ethnic, and ideological homogeneity, anti-Slavs, resistance to any type of Yugoslav state, the involvement of third forces which take advantage of the idea of Greater Albania to further personal goals, and the involvement of the state of Albania as the center and promoter of the idea of Greater Albania.

- ~~territorial homogeneity~~ - the objective set for the creation of "Greater Albania", which would extend to the territories of present Albania, Macedonia (Kumanovo, Skopje, Titov Veles, Prilep, Bitola, Resen, Ohrid, Struga, Kicevo, Debar, Gostivar, and Tetovo), Serbia (Kosovo and Metohia, Vranje, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Novi Pazar, and Tutin) and Montenegro (Ulcinj, Bar, Titograd, Rozaj, Plav, and Gusinje) as well as the Cemeria area in Greece. Actually, it is the issue of spacial national integration that strongly activates Albanian nationalism, with reliance on Albania. Since the realization of this formula endangers neighboring nations and states, it inevitably leads to conflicts with them. Thereby, a brief look at the territories encompassed in the projection of "Greater Albania" indicates that the most endangered area is Macedonia, because the aspirations include more than a half of its present territory;
- ~~ethnic homogeneity~~ implies collection of all Albanians into a "Greater Albania" and is one of the main components of the maxim "one state-one nation-one language". The retroactivity of this constant is seen on many levels. First, this tendency leads inevitably to the isolation of the Albanian nation and interrupts the many established links in all areas with neighboring nations and states; that is, with the members of other nations in Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, which in the long-term is detrimental to the development of the Albanian nation itself; second, the implementation of this tendency leads to efforts to achieve an enormous birthrate within the Albanian nation on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to various measures, most often brutal, intended to decrease the numbers of other nations considered not to belong to the "historically pure Albanian territories", which represents a step toward fascism; third, the strong emotional bond with the members of one's own nation, which is implied by this constant, necessarily leads to hatred between nations, clashes, and tragic consequences in the long-run.
- ~~ideological homogeneity~~ – the basic criterion in determining who is a true Albanian, based on orientation toward the idea for "Greater Albania". This idea must be primary, regardless of any closer ideological-political determinations of the indi-

vidual Albanian. As a matter of fact, this is the point which differentiates the "Albanian patriot" from the anti-patriot, the "corrupt person", "traitor", "spy", etc. (these labels are taken from the terminology of Albanian nationalists). Thus, a strong psychological pressure is exercised on all members of the Albanian nation; that is on the Albanian national minority, to accept the tendency toward national homogenization.

- **anti-Slavism** - Macedonians, Serbs, and Montenegrins (Albanian nationalists use the term "Slavs" for these groups) are considered nations lacking the historical right to the territories to which they have aspired in attempts to create "Greater Albania". This historical right has been afforded only to Albanians as the "native population" upon the territories mentioned.
- **involvement of third powers in efforts to realize the idea of Greater Albania** - actually, this involves utilizing Albanian nationalists to realize the expansionist plans of other states in the Balkans. Thereby, Albanian nationalists become a mere tool in the hands of certain powers attempting to realize their vital interests, depending on the projected spheres of interest.
- **the involvement of Albania as a center and promoter of Albanian nationalism** - utilizing legal, semi-legal and illegal methods, and playing off the various ideological-political factions (peasants, youth, bourgeoisie, republican, royalist, fascist, bureaucratic, dogmatic), Albania has been participating in provoking, instigating, organizing and stirring up Albanian nationalism among the Albanian national minority in Yugoslavia, and among Albanians who for various reasons either permanently or temporarily reside in third countries. In the first years after Ahmet Zogu came to power (1924) and between 1945-1948 (until the adoption of the Informburo Resolution) there was a relative decrease of this activity of Albania. Here it must be said that the leading (ruling) structures in Albania have used Albanian nationalism as a means to realize their class-social interests; that is, to remain in power - with national homogenization and the increase of national control, it was easier to distract attention from existing social disparities with which Albanian people were manipulated.

The issue of the constants of Albanian nationalism is of particular significance for the security prognosis, in respect to the development of possible modalities, both conceptually and in concrete terms.

In this context, it is worth noting Sinan Hasani's conclusion in his book "Kosovo - Truth and Misconception": Albanian nationalists have the same relationship toward the "Prizren League

1878-81", when the map of "Ethnic Albania" was drawn up, as Islamic fundamentalists have towards the Koran.

Five political subsystems in Kosovo

The current political-security situation in Kosovo consists provisionally of five political subsystems and five military-security (para-security) subsystems.

Five Political Subsystems

On a political level, the subsystems are represented by the Kouchner administration (UN - international presence), the structure of the former Hashim Tachi's "interim government", the structure of Ibrahim Rugova's LDK, the structure of Bujar Bukoshi and his "exile government" and the structure of the leaders of the Serb entity, Bishop Artemije and Momcilo Trajkovic. In the Albanian political corps, Redjep Kjosja and Veton Surroi are especially influential; the former has closer ties to the extremist movement, and the latter shows clear liberal characteristics and tolerance for other ethnic groups in Kosovo, and is openly critical of extremist elements within his own ethnic group. In that sense, it can be said that Veton Surroi's attitude is that Albanians in Kosovo are endangered by fascist elements and groups within their own ranks, groups which put into jeopardy and possibly even obstruct democratic processes in Kosovo.

The group emerging from the KLA ("Tachists") after the end of the NATO air campaign, is, of course, the most influential, and is striving to quickly seize power in the political vacuum which exists within Kosovo territory. Actually, establishing a parallel but de facto system of government to Kouchner's administration (from the smallest settlements to Pristina) should ensure their victory in the elections anticipated in the year 2000. This group takes all credit for the established situation in Kosovo, and, on this basis, grants itself an exclusive right to rule in Kosovo during the next 8-10 years. Its main characteristics are nationalist radicalism and the goal to achieve, at any cost, an independent Kosovo, and, eventually, an "Ethnic Albania". This group has its roots in the emigrant organization LPK - Popular Movement for Kosovo, and the illegal organizations which in the former SFRY appeared under the Stalinist ideological auspices of Enver, and which are known mainly as GMLK - Group of Marxist-Leninists in Kosovo. The name LPK itself was adopted sometime prior to 1990, while previously, the name DARJ was used (Movement for Albanian Republic in Yugoslavia) and, after 1982, DASRJ (Movement for Albanian Socialist Republic in Yugoslavia). In Europe, LPK has had the most influence among Albanians in Switzerland. In regard to relations with the ruling structures in Albania, it is close

to the socialist government of Fatos Nano, Pandeli Majko. According to recent information, plans are being made to form a separate political party under the leadership of Hasim Tachi, which will be called the "Party for Democratic Progress in Kosovo". This new party is to articulate and realize, in coordination with the "Party of Albanian Democratic Unity" led by Bardil Mahmuti (also from the LPK group), the objective of gaining legal political power in Kosovo.

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, is slowly but surely strengthening its position among the Albanian political corps, which were shaken during the NATO air campaign. The undoubted authority of Ibrahim Rugova and the results he has accomplished in the past nine years, especially his acceptance of tolerant methods in the building of a future multi-ethnic structure in Kosovo, should provide realistic chances for the LDK to grow into a serious rival of the "Tachists."

According to the "Washington Post", recent public opinion polls in Kosovo have shown that, should elections be held now, the moderate political leader, Ibrahim Rugova, would defeat the extreme candidate, Hasim Tachi, by 4:1. This can be attributed to the fact that, in peacetime conditions, Albanians in Kosovo prefer LDK's moderation to the despotism of the former KLA groups. Recent events in the Albanian political scene in Kosovo indicate that serious tensions are arising which may produce an internal clash, if the "Tachists" feel their expected absolute power is endangered.

Bujar Bukoshi's group and his former "government in exile", although lacking a public presence, should not be discounted. During the past 8 years Bujar Bukoshi has gained a solid number of supporters, both within and outside Kosovo and has managed to raise a large financial fund (known as the "3%"), which is a trump card he will be using shrewdly in seeking a high political position in Kosovo. It is uncertain whether he will act independently or join one of the two most visible leaders at the moment, Tachi and Rugova.

Considering his previous conflict with Tachi (KLA-FARK relation), it is to be expected that he would have more in common with Rugova's political option. His future engagement will depend to a great extent on the political scene in Albania. Should Sali Berisha strengthen his position and possibly come to power, it will open a much greater political space for Bujar Bukoshi as well.

The Serb political corps under Bishop Artemije and Momcilo Trajkovic have actually reduced their requests to the preservation of the few Serbs and Montenegrins that have remained in Kosovo, that is, to sheer survival, in light of the expulsion of their population under pressure of Albanian extremists (threats, kidnappings, setting houses and properties on fire, killings) and the inability of

the international military forces (KFOR) to protect them. The extremely tense political situation in Serbia and Yugoslavia is also a factor. The result of this is a push for the establishment of cantons in which the Serbs and Montenegrins would be secure. In the present situation, especially if a speedy return of the 180,000 Serbs and Montenegrins who have moved out is not effected, this group will no longer have a significant impact on the structure, processes and decision-making in Kosovo.

Five Security Subsystems

On a security level, there are five structures in Kosovo which exist and deserve attention: KFOR - exponent of the UN international community; Kosovo Protection Corps under the patronage of the Kouchner administration; undercover KLA members; Serb protection groups, and the organized part of the Albanian underground (Mafia).

KFOR forces undoubtedly represent the strongest component, regardless of the fact that they are not capable of ensuring the complete safety of all citizens in Kosovo, especially of the Serb ethnic group. If in the period prior to the NATO air campaign against former Yugoslavia, the cases of repression against Albanians on the part of the Yugoslav government were condemned, the burden for the numerous cases of violence against Serbs and Montenegrins under the KFOR mandate must be borne by the international forces, and serious reconsideration is needed to achieve solutions which will lead to a real democratic community (multi-ethnic and multi-religious). Thus far, it seems clear that the primary armed forces having KFOR components have not assessed the situation qualitatively enough, or the possible dangers of destabilization of the area. This applies particularly to the region of Kosovska Mitrovica, Pristina, Gnjilane, and Prizren, where there are frequent and tragic incidents directed against the Serbian population.

The Protection Corps, which has recently begun operating under the auspices of the Kouchner administration, should neither be underestimated, nor should its real power be overrated. Because it has only been in operation a short time, there are as yet too few facts available in order to evaluate the successfulness of its security role. However, due to the knowledge among the Serb population that this Protection Corps is largely composed of Albanians - former KLA members - the Serb population considers it more of a threat than a protection force. Consequently, there has been a move to form Serb Protection Corps, which will protect citizens of Serbian ethnic origin. These facts provide an additional illustration of the fact that the process of democratic political and social development of Kosovo will be very difficult, as the lines of division are still very deep.

The undercover KLA still appears to be the biggest obstacle to the realization of a democratic Kosovo, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The existence of the KLA secret police is a public secret among Kosovo Albanians. After the NATO air campaign, the KLA secret police carried out searches for and execution of Albanians and Serbs who were believed to have cooperated and were still cooperating with the Yugoslav authorities. The members of this structure operate in Macedonia, Albania, and Western-European countries, in addition to Kosovo.

Under these conditions, it is important to note that many of the KLA members, especially the commanding staff, will be unable to fulfill their personal objectives (primarily material and financial) under the current conditions in Kosovo and within the auspices of the international community. As a result, many individuals from this structure have become closely aligned with organized groups of the Albanian Mafia in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania, creating a strong outside network outside opposing the official Kouchner administration. Because the participation of individuals of Albanian ethnic origin in the Balkan and European Mafia is very high, it is clear that unless the legal Kouchner administration and KFOR forces launch an aggressive attack, this link between the undercover KLA and Albanian Mafia will present a serious security threat, not only within Kosovo, but also in this region of the Balkans, and including Europe as well. The undercover KLA has access to secret storehouses of arms, ammunition, and explosives necessary for the realization of the projected independent Kosovo, and because of the nationalist radicalism upon which it is based, it will be unwilling to wait much longer. In the event that an "independent Kosovo" is not effected, the undercover KLA may also be expected to come into conflict with KFOR forces and the Protection Units of the Kouchner administration.

UN Responsibility

The responsibility that the UN undertook in Kosovo, which, to a large extent, is a consequence of the NATO action (attack) against FR Yugoslavia (for the first time in its history) represents for the international community one of the most difficult exams in its history. As a result, most analysts of the Kosovo crisis feel that the UN entered Kosovo unprepared and lacked an appropriate solution on how to most efficiently fill the political vacuum that had been created. It must be borne in mind that the success or failure of the international mission in Kosovo will depend on the level of implementation of Resolution 1244, and the UN and the leading NATO forces will bear the burden for failure and any tragic consequences which might occur in the future in this part of the

Balkans. One has the impression that NATO has simply withdrawn and shifted the entire responsibility to the UN, since, following the military strike, without any prior decision by the UN, NATO forces under KFOR which were posted in Kosovo began building military bases without any prior decision by the UN for a long-term presence, violating FR Yugoslavia territorial integrity, and immediately shifting the responsibility, i.e. the civilian administration, to the UN. As a result, this organization will be shouldering the responsibility for every further failure.

A particularly significant aspect of the success or failure of the international mission in Kosovo will be the realization of the principles in Resolution 1244, such as: maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of FR Yugoslavia; return of all refugees; establishment of substantial autonomy in Kosovo within FR Yugoslavia and securing the personal and material safety of citizens in Kosovo. Without this, it will be impossible to engage in democratic political processes, build legal and financial structures and initiate human freedoms and rights in the European sense of the word. However, when the situation in the area stabilizes, radical Albanian nationalist forces will most likely continue attempts to realize "independent Kosovo", since prior to and during the NATO military campaign against FR Yugoslavia, they felt the Alliance to be their ally in the realization of their goal (or at least nurtured that illusion). It is clear that if the violent creation of new states by national minorities becomes a practice, there would be a conflagration throughout Europe, which would be impossible to extinguish. Moreover, the present situation in Kosovo may serve to revive hopes in some Balkan and European countries for the creation of "greater states" and the undertaking of "campaigns of conquest", which is a film we have seen in the not so distant past, with all the accompanying tragic consequences. The political and security situation has been disrupted in the Balkans and there is a danger that this peninsula will become a "ghetto of Europe" over the long term, as the Bulgarian sociologist and publisher Marija Todorova has said (lecture at Columbia University, United States, May 29, 1999, presented via the Internet on July 23, 1999). In this context, the security situation surrounding the Republic of Macedonia (referred to as FYRM under the UN framework) is especially complex, as extreme Albanian nationalists still aspire to more than half of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, which represents a political threat to its security and territorial integrity. Therefore, the principle of unchangeable state borders, in this case in the Balkans, and full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of existing states, is the only acceptable option. As the same time, full realization of a democratic, pluralist political environment and respect for human freedoms

and internal rights is necessary. A quicker and more effective implementation of Resolution 1244 in Kosovo will certainly serve to decrease tensions from the north toward the Republic of Macedonia and will create possibilities for democratic changes in FR Yugoslavia; that is, Serbia (i.e. democratic changes in Slobodan Milosevic's rigid team), and, at the same time, will contribute to the relaxation of the overall situation in this part of the Balkans. Moreover, the newly arisen situation in Kosovo may again revive hopes with some Balkan and European countries for the creation of "greater states" and undertaking "conquest campaign" - a film already seen in the not so distant history with a lot of tragic consequences. In the Balkans in the current period the political and security situation has been disturbed and there is a danger that this peninsula be turned into a "Ghetto of Europe" in the long run, as the Bulgarian sociologist and publisher Marija Todorova says (lecture at the Columbia University - USA on 29 May 1999, presented via the Internet on July 23, 1999). In this context, the security situation surrounding the Republic of Macedonia is especially complex, which within the UN framework still is under the reference FYRM. Namely, in the projections of extreme Albanian nationalist there are aspirations to more than half of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, which undoubtedly represents a potential threat to its security and territorial integrity. Therefore, the principle of unchangeable state borders, in this case in the Balkans, fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of existing states, is the only acceptable option for it, having, at the same time, full realization of a democratic pluralist political environment and respect of human freedoms and rights internally. The faster and more qualitative implementation of Resolution 1244 in Kosovo will certainly be in favor of decreasing tensions from the north towards the Republic of Macedonia, and will create some room for democratic changes in FR Yugoslavia, that is Serbia (democratic change of Slobodan Milosevic's rigid team), and, at the same time, will contribute to the relaxation of the overall situation in this part of the Balkans.

Instead of a conclusion

- The newly established situation in Kosovo, after the end of the NATO air strikes against FR Yugoslavia, has opened, instead of resolved, a large number of issues affecting Kosovo, Yugoslavia, the region, and Europe, issues which will place long-term burdens on the security situation in the explosive "Balkan powder keg".
- The primary emphasis in the current situation in Kosovo is on a quick and qualitative implementation of Resolution 1244 of

the UN Security Council, which represents a serious test for the international community and will have a very important effect internationally on the resolution of this and similar conflicts

- The international community was insufficiently prepared to effect the formation of a civilian administration, and this resulted in organized violence on the part of radical Albanian nationalists, especially against the Serb population. Their massive exodus from Kosovo is also the result of the insufficient preparation and engagement of the numerous KFOR forces;
- Among the Albanian political corps in Kosovo, the former KLA representatives ("Tachists") characterized by their extremism, and the LDK moderate forces led by Ibrahim are the two main factions. In peacetime, it appears that the "moderates" are slowly but surely gaining in political strength and are much more closely aligned to the policies of the international community regarding a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community in the form of basic autonomy;
- From a security point of view, serious threats may arise from the "undercover KLA"; that is, former members of the commanding cadre of this paramilitary formation, who will not assume higher positions in the newly established transitional government of the civilian administration, and will not be satisfied with the form of "essential autonomy" that is required by Resolution 1244, but will insist on the goal of an "independent Kosovo", which may lead them to a clash with KFOR forces;
- In order to gain political power through the elections which are expected to be held next year, "undercover KLA" is assuming de facto power throughout Kosovo, connecting itself with Albanian Mafia members from Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. This connection may in the long run seriously endanger security in this part of the Balkans, and disable the creation of legal and economic structures within Kosovo itself;

From the Republic of Macedonia's security aspect, the most acceptable option is the principle of unchanged state borders, fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state, and, at the same time, creating rich democratic, pluralist political environments in each individual state. In respect to the current situation in Kosovo, it implies the full implementation of Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council.